



MEETING SUMMARY

TRANS-LAKE WASHINGTON PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND INDUSTRY, SEATTLE, WA MARCH 13, 2001 — 4:00 – 7:00 P.M.

INTRODUCTION, WELCOME, AND AGENDA REVIEW

Pat Serie, EnviroIssues, opened the meeting and reviewed the agenda. The purpose of the meeting was to receive information about the modal analysis and preliminary recommendations from the project team regarding the multi-modal alternatives. No recommendations would be requested from the committee to pass on to the Executive Committee. Updates on the community design process and early actions were also distributed. No changes were made to the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were made.

RESULTS OF MODAL ASSESSMENT

Jeff Peacock, Parametrix, reviewed the process of the first and second level screening. He reiterated that the modal assessments enable the creation of multi-modal alternatives for second level screening with an understanding of each of the components' individual contributions. The modal assessments have focused on performance measures, impacts and costs. Highway alternatives include interchanges and termini; high capacity transit (HCT) alternatives are compared against each other for refinement of potential alignment. Jeff reminded the committee that the purpose of including HCT analysis is to determine if Sound Transit's long-range vision for HCT in the I-90 corridor should be amended.

HIGH CAPACITY TRANSIT MODAL ANALYSIS

Jim Parsons, Puget Sound Transit Consultants, reviewed the high capacity transit analysis, again reiterating that the objective is to determine if the Sound Transit long-range vision needs to be amended. He outlined possible routes on both the west and east sides of the lake. Possibilities show options for bus rapid transit versus fixed guideway, and options for a route on SR 520 versus a mid-lake crossing versus the I-90 corridor.

West side fixed guideway options include two loops between the University District, Ballard, and Fremont; and along the east side of Lake Union. Eastside networks included two variations between SR 520 and I-405: One route passing through Clyde Hill via tunnel to downtown Bellevue, and the other following the SR 520 and BNSF right-of-way. HCT in the I-90 corridor was modeled with service to downtown Bellevue, with extensions to Kirkland and Redmond.

Bus rapid transit could include a network of trunk and feeder routes or multiple longer routes. A final configuration would be determined by how best to handle large numbers of buses in crowded activity centers. The mid-lake crossing would have comparable routes and networks on both sides of the lake.

Total daily volume in transit ridership across the lake (using a lake 'screen line' that included SR 520, I-90, and SR 522) showed no significant differences for any of the corridors, nor for the modes. There was a slight increase in ridership for the SR 520 corridor, possibly attributable to service to the University District. Variations in ridership projections are a function of the assumed networks; there is more sensitivity to the exact layout of a transit network in the I-90 corridor. Models showed up to a 40% increase in transit ridership over the no action alternative. Peak period transit ridership for the reverse commute shows better performance on SR 520 than I-90.

Lorie Parker, CH2M Hill, reviewed the potential environmental impacts of each of the options, excluding neighborhood impacts which will not be known until the design is more complete. Along SR 520, in the Montlake area, the Endangered Species Act (ESA) is an issue for both fish migration and bald eagles. There are four parks in that area, including the Arboretum. There are significant 4(f) issues in the area. On the Eastside, Yarrow Bay wetlands, Kelsey Creek, Marymoor Park, the Sammamish River, and Bear Creek are all areas facing potential impacts.

The I-90 corridor on the west side would face fewer impacts, since the current bus-only facility would be used. On the Eastside, Mercer Slough, which represents a major park, wetland habitat, and historic buildings and Pickering Farms, would be impacted, in addition to those listed above.

A mid-lake crossing, in addition to those identified for the networks on the west and east sides, would also include construction impacts at the waterline, as well as impacts of portals and ventilation structures.

Jim Parsons presented the cost information for each of the options. Cost estimates are purely conceptual, and not based on design. The numbers are most useful for comparison within modes. He noted that the costs are larger for BRT over a fixed guideway system, because BRT would require a wider facility across the lake. Costs for the I-90 corridor include the cost of converting the reversible roadway, but do not include new structures. The mid-lake crossing costs assume either a floating submerged tunnel or a deep bored tunnel. Costs include all capital costs including fleets and maintenance facilities, but do not include mitigation. Cost savings for the I-90 corridor also reflect the use of an existing facility.

The total costs for HCT options reflect the anticipated costs of entire transit networks. The networks could be implemented and constructed in stages.

Discussion noted the following points:

- Mitigation costs will be shown separately from the capital costs of the multi-modal packages, as the packages are prepared for second-level screening.
- Ridership projections for HCT assume that no other transit facilities exist along the routes; ridership projections are 2020 model runs based on current ridership levels. Assumptions have been made about levels of service for the models, but detailed operating plans are not yet determined.
- Cost and travel time are the most important criteria that will determine mode shifts.
- The no action alternative projections assumes implementation of the King County six year plan, and Sound Transit's Sound Move regional plan, as well as the existing configuration of lanes on I-90.
- It was suggested that model parameters be looked at in depth.
- The Wetherill Nature Preserve and smaller wetlands on the north side of SR 520, including the Yarrow Bay wetlands, will not be affected by the project.
- Costs for the SR 520 options do not include the limitations of a possible parallel tunnel to downtown Seattle.
- BRT does not demonstrate any savings compared to light rail or other fixed-guideway system. A shared facility would better accommodate a fixed guideway system.
- The network would carry over 100,000 riders per day in some of the alternatives; the ridership projections in the presentation represent just the trips across the lake. Modeling showed that a system serving the University District would service a large number of riders on the Seattle side. A summary report should contain these numbers.
- There was concern expressed with the possibility of dropping the deep bored tunnel for a mid-lake crossing.
- A possible conversion of the I-90 center roadway would be accommodated financially via a transfer of budget money between public agencies – WSDOT and Sound Transit.
- Generally, underground portions of any alignment would be bored tunnels, with cut and cover station construction.
- BRT and fixed guideway ridership models are the same, and are blind to the particular technology implementation.
- The flexibility of a bus system to move stations, change schedules, etc., may be a detriment to attracting riders, as the system would be more unpredictable.

- The 25th anniversary of the I-90 Memorandum of Agreement will be celebrated this summer, committing WSDOT to converting the center roadway to HCT.
- The Central Link Light Rail projects 156,000 trips per day. The cost per trip on an I-90 or SR 520 facility will likely be higher in comparison, because of lower ridership.
- The length of westside tunneling on a Ballard loop would be approximately 2.5 – 3 miles north of the Ship Canal, and 1 mile south of the Ship Canal.
- The Sound Transit incremental model and the Puget Sound Regional Models were used for HCT ridership modeling. Ridership estimates in the Sound Transit model are more conservative. PSRC models will be used in the multi-modal screening analysis.

Jim Parsons reviewed the conclusions about the HCT modal analysis. He called attention to the following:

- A Clyde Hill tunnel option on the Eastside does not significantly shorten travel times from most trips between points on the Eastside and Seattle.
- The mid-lake crossing benefits do not offset the high risks and costs of tunneling, and the team believes it should be dropped from consideration.

HIGHWAY MODAL ANALYSIS

Jeff Peacock reviewed the highway alternatives and assumptions considered in the modal analysis:

- B-1 Minimum footprint
- B-2 HOV lane in each direction
- B-3 HOV lane and GP lane in each direction
- B-5 Bus only lanes

Jeff gave an overview of the performance of each. The model for the minimum footprint (B-1) does not capture safety and reliability changes that would improve throughput over the no action alternative. The HOV lane (B-2) showed a 33% increase in person-trips, including an increase in mode sharing percentages. The GP and HOV (B-3) significantly increased the total person trips with a slightly lower percentage in mode shares. The bus only lanes (B-5) showed a decrease in total numbers of vehicles, with only a modest increase in the number of person trips served. The efficiency of the HOV lanes, therefore, would be much greater than the bus only lanes.

Lorie Parker reviewed the environmental impacts of the highway modal alternatives. The areas impacted are generally the same as for the HCT options in the SR 520 corridor. A tunnel connection through the Montlake Cut to Pacific Street is being considered, and such a project

would be of great concern to the resource agencies. In general, environmental impacts will increase with the width of the facility.

Jeff Peacock reviewed the costs, noting that figures shown do not include mitigation (except stormwater), demand management packages, or the cost of money over time. The minimum footprint option, which assumes the facility would be upgraded to design standard shoulders, and that replacement of fixed spans would be more efficient than seismic retrofits, would cost more than one billion dollars. The total costs include design contingencies,

The following points were noted in discussion:

- The modeling seems to suggest that adding highway lanes increments the capacity proportionally to the number of lanes added. The operational analysis has not been done, which would show that the numbers would change closer to the interchanges.
- Connections to I-5 via the express lanes would result in greater community impacts if full design standards are followed. Community issues in the area include noise impacts, especially with regards to the express lanes, and WSDOT is currently working with the community on those issues.
- The existing right-of-way on the eastside at its narrowest point should be able to accommodate an eight-lane freeway facility, though it is too early in the design process to state this definitively. Eight lanes will not fit into the existing right-of-way on the west side.
- Shoulder width can vary based on the size of the facility; an eight-lane facility requires wider inside shoulders than a six- or four-lane facility.
- What guarantee would be made that shoulders do not become a lane for GP traffic at some point in the future?
- Since costs include reconstruction of the I-405 interchange, cost estimates for the I-405 Study and the Trans-Lake Project should not reflect those costs twice.

PROPOSED MULTI-MODAL PACKAGES

Jeff Peacock reviewed the proposed multi-modal packages recommended by the project team. He stated that the information was being shared with the committee for informational purposes only, and that recommendations would not be sought from the various committees until April. He highlighted the philosophies and ideas behind each of the packages.

The project team has proposed dropping consideration of the following:

1. Mid-Lake HCT crossing. The models have indicated the same levels of ridership as the other two corridors. Since the purpose of including the alternative was to see the benefits of having direct downtown Seattle to downtown Bellevue connections, it does not seem

prudent to take on the risk associated with tunneling either in a deep bored or floating submerged tunnel for little added benefit.

2. Minimum footprint. The minimum footprint does not ultimately meet the purpose and need of the project. Other ideas are being proposed which expand upon the philosophy of the idea.
3. Bus only lanes. Much higher throughput is achieved by combining buses in the HOV lanes, at a much greater efficiency. A hybrid is proposed to expand upon this possibility.

The multi-modal alternatives proposed for further consideration are as follows:

1. No Action. It is suggested that under the No Action alternative, just the floating portion of the bridge be replaced, with no other changes made in the corridor. The risk of not taking action on the remaining fixed spans and the rest of the corridor can then be evaluated, and the EIS can then compare all other actions against a truly 'no action' alternative.
2. Safety and Preservation alternative. This alternative shows the cost of no action in terms of replacement of both the floating portion of the bridge and the fixed spans and Portage Bay viaducts for seismic considerations. Refuge for disabled vehicles would be provided, but not necessarily to full design standards. The concept adds non-motorized facilities to the corridor, and would include an aggressive TDM package. It assumes I-90 operates on the R8A option, with HCT in that corridor.
3. SR 520 HOV and I-90 HCT
4. SR 520 HOV and GP and I-90 HCT. The GP lane would terminate at West Lake Sammamish Parkway.
5. SR 520 HOV and SR 520 HCT. HOV lanes would terminate at I-5.
6. SR 520 HOV and GP and SR 520 HCT. This alternative represents the maximum build, with a fixed guideway system. Direct HOV connections would be made to I-5.
7. SR 520 HOV/BRT. A hybrid BRT is accomplished by separating the HOV/BRT lane with a four feet wide pylon separation to enable full speed next to congested GP traffic.
8. SR 520 HOV/BRT and GP. This alternative also explores a separated, dedicated busway from Eastlake to downtown, in the existing right-of-way.

Jim Parsons noted that the operational configuration of I-90 (4-2-4, 3-2-3, etc) is uncertain, and that an assumption needs to be made for modeling purposes. The choice for an HCT corridor will not change the HCT modal analysis. However, the choice of a corridor for HCT will affect the bus and roadway volumes in both of the corridors. Another permutation would be added if a different assumption is made for the I-90 roadway configuration.

Discussion noted the following points:

- The possibility of having HCT on both corridors at some point in the future should be incorporated into the design.
- Drawings showing the number of lanes in each of the alternatives and the associated widths should be provided.
- A brown-bag session on modeling should be held.
- Seattle may have some comments on adding another route into the city via Fairview.
- Roland White introduced some ideas about how to integrate design and mitigation where possible and feasible. He distributed drawings showing possibilities for integrating stormwater retention and overlaying the HCT lanes, thus narrowing the footprint.

EARLY ACTIONS AND COMMUNITY DESIGN UPDATE

An update on the early actions status and an update presentation on the community design process and open houses were distributed.

MEETING SCHEDULE

Pat Serie reviewed the upcoming meeting schedule. The next Advisory Committee meeting will be held April 17, 2001, at the North Bellevue Senior Community Center.

MEETING HANDOUTS

- Agenda
- Highway Alternatives Modal Evaluation Initial Findings, report, Mar 9, 2001
- High Capacity Transit Modal Evaluation Initial Findings, report, Mar 9, 2001
- Modal Assessment Results, presentation, March 2001
- Proposed Alternatives for Multi-Modal Evaluation, draft matrix, March 13, 2001
- Input from Community Design Workshops and Open Houses, presentation, March 2001
- Early Actions Progress Report, March 10, 2001
- Memo to Committees RE: SR 520 Light Rail Connections of the Central Link Corridor, March 13, 2001, from Barbara Gilliland, Sound Transit
- Comments from Seattle Open House, March 6, 2001
- Comments from Eastside Open House, March 8, 2001
- Meeting schedule

Additional Handouts

- Conceptual drawing for design integration, Roland White

ACTION ITEMS

- Show the lane and shoulder widths in the next highways handout.
- Spend time discussing bike and pedestrian lanes in the corridor.
- Schedule brown bag session on modeling.

MEETING ATTENDEES

Advisory Committee Members

Present

X	Amick	Jean
	Andrews	Deborah
X	Aschenbach	Hans
	Beltz	Allison
X	Culp	Barbara
	Dent	Bob
X	Eades	Bertha
	Gatchet	Dan
X	Gunby	Virginia
	Hallenbeck	Mark
X	Hart	Fred
	Hill	Jim
X	Hill	Gregory
X	Holman	Linda
	Hurley	Peter
X	(Rutherford	Scott)
X	Joneson	Kingsley
X	Leed	Jean
X	MacIsaac	Jim
X	Newstrum	Elizabeth
	Odell	Nina
X	Ray	Janet
X	Reckers, Jr.	James
X	Resha	John
X	Sheck	Ronald
X	Stelle	Claudia
X	Tate	Bob
	Tochterman	Thomas B.
X	Wasserman	Eugene
	Weed	Mark
X	White	Rich
X	White	Roland
	Wyble	John

Other attendees

Jonathan Dubman, Montlake

Philip Grega, Seattle
Don Padelford, CFM

Project Team

Les Rubstello, WSDOT
Rob Fellows, WSDOT
Jeff Peacock, Parametrix
Jim Parsons, Puget Sound Transit Consultants
Cathy Strombom, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Hans Saxer, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Lorie Parker, CH2M Hill
Eileen Wilson, CH2M Hill
Pat Serie, EnviroIssues
Amy Grotefendt, EnviroIssues
Paul Hezel, EnviroIssues

PJH